



Allegheny County Sportsmen's League Inc.

Organized in 1921 Incorporated in 1933

*Fighting for Liberty, Conservation, Wildlife, and our Natural Resources
for more than 100 Years*

P.O. Box 205, Presto, PA 15142

www.acslpa.org

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I am writing to express ACSL's full support of [HB495](#) and [SB708](#) and respectfully request that you also support and help to advance these sister pieces of legislation.

Both pieces of legislation are written to amend Title 34 to officially re-establish the first day of deer season in Pennsylvania to be the Monday following Thanksgiving.

The Pennsylvania Game Commission has conducted a 5-year experiment. In 2019 the PGC moved the rifle deer opening day to the Saturday following Thanksgiving. "Buck Season" traditionally began on the Monday following Thanksgiving and this had been the tradition for well over 50 years. ACSL was ultimately against the Saturday opener when PGC imposed the change in 2019.

[We predicted that moving the opening day to Saturday would result in:](#)

- Less youth partaking in the opening day.
- Less Pennsylvanians participating in deer season on the opening weekend.
- Un-necessary stress on families as sportsmen transition from the Thanksgiving holiday to "Deer Season"
- A tremendously negative economic impact upon the Communities of the Northern Tier

ACSL believes that ALL these things have come to fruition. Continuing "status quo" shows a lack of sportsmanship and compassion for the hunters, business owners, and citizens of Pennsylvania.

Please indulge me by imagining a scenario.

Thursday is Thanksgiving. Perhaps you are prepping food or traveling or picking up family. You enjoy dinner, football games, family time, and holiday cheer with loved ones. You go to sleep and awaken on Friday. Maybe it is "Black Friday" Shopping for some? Perhaps your family digs boxes out of the attic and sets up the Christmas tree? Maybe you have breakfast with your family members that came to visit for Thanksgiving. Maybe some of you were a little slow because you had too much wine on Thanksgiving?

But, oh crap... look at the time.... NOW you need to pack the vehicle, drive to camp, open it up, perform your last-minute rituals and get some sleep so you can get into the woods to your favorite spot before sunrise.

Well, ok so maybe you didn't do "Black Friday". Maybe you skipped out before your in-laws woke up. Maybe you let your wife or husband deal with the Christmas decorations. Maybe you left for camp at daybreak on Friday so you could pack the vehicle, drive to camp, open it up, get ready for the next day. Maybe you will have enough light to check your zero on your hunting rifle? You'll have to fix the leak in the camp roof later there is no time or daylight left to deal with it. Time to go to sleep so you can be in the woods and be at your favorite spot before sunrise.

Sounds hectic, doesn't it? Well, if you are going to get into the woods, you NEED to leave Friday because school doesn't give the kids Monday off anymore, because opening day is on Saturday now... not Monday.

My "story" IS fiction. However, this fiction is fact for MANY of our fellow Pennsylvanians. Whether you hunt or not, I am sure you can imagine how likely this story is for so many people.

Then what is the net result of a Saturday opener?

- Less youth partaking in the opening day.
- Less Pennsylvanians participating in deer season on the opening weekend.
- Un-necessary stress on families as sportsmen transition from the Thanksgiving holiday to "Deer Season"
- A tremendously negative economic impact upon the Communities of the Northern Tier

Obviously, *some* sportsmen LIKE having the weekend to hunt. Especially if they are unable to take a weekday off work. I respect that and offer a perfect solution later in this letter.

There is one MAJOR detail that cannot be ignored. The Saturday opener HAS, without question, devastated the economy of many of the communities in the Northern Tier.

To share a little personal background, although I am the President of the Allegheny County Sportsmen's League, I grew up in Cameron County, PA. I am a proud graduate of CCHS (Class of '92). I grew up smack dab in the middle of the Northern Tier. I can say with absolute authority that the weekend before buck season was one of the biggest money-making weekends of the year for local businesses and volunteer organizations. Trout Season weekend would come in 2nd, but "Buck Season" was by far the biggest income opportunity.

My Dad cooked pancakes for the breakfasts served at the Lions Club in Sinnemahoning. The Methodist church would conduct spaghetti dinners over the weekend. The Firehall would hold their annual gun bash on Saturday. As a kid, I would sell popcorn to all of the "flatlanders" at Rogers Bar and Callahan's Store in Driftwood. All the local businesses would sell sporting goods, hardware, propane, kerosene, fuel oil, firewood, ammo, food, provisions, and libations to the orange army of hunters that would drive up to the endless mountains for buck season.

Generations of campers would meet at the Buttonwood in Emporium, or the Willows in Sinnemahoning to have dinner and talk about seasons past. Remember when that 16-point buck got away? How about cherishing and sharing the stories of last times we hunted with "Pappy George"? I remember the first time Dad let me try chew and I threw up on a log and scared away the deer. Remember how Grandpap told us about how in 1979 the snow was so deep that he had to drag a deer a full mile because his truck could not make it up the road? Remember how every year he told the story he would add another mile?

All THAT trade, commerce, fellowship, and tradition is largely gone now. Why? Because hunters now have to perform 3 days' worth of things on black Friday; short cutting Thanksgiving, dismissing Small Business Saturday and bypassing the local commerce and fellowship that once happened on the weekend prior to the Monday opening of deer season.

Business owners across Pennsylvania have reported terrible losses because of the Game Commission imposition of the Saturday opener. I am aware of MANY businesses and groups, including the Cameron County Chamber of Commerce who have reached out directly to the PGC, pleading that they return to the Monday opener, but their reports and have been dismissed, and their pleas have fallen on deaf ears.

In 2019, ten separate businesses reported a combined loss of over \$360,000. That was just the 10 businesses that reported. A \$30,000 hit or even a \$10,000 hit for any business is a significant loss especially for a small business in the mountains of PA where the biggest profit-making opportunity was the weekend before the Monday of Buck Season.

It is VERY important to note that 2019 is a vital year to measure the financial impact of the Saturday opener, as 2019 was BEFORE “the government overreach and lockdown phase” of our country (Covid).

Tidioute Area Volunteer Fire Department is one of many volunteer public safety organizations that have reported less than ½ the normal attendance to their main fundraisers in 2019 and in the years following. Many organizations have since cancelled their “buck season” fundraisers because they can no longer afford to conduct them. How many other businesses and organizations are no longer around to tell their stories or report their losses? These losses have not just effected the financial stability of the region, they have also effected the public safety of the citizens of the Commonwealth.

What I suggest is, with your help, we put the season opener back on the Monday following Thanksgiving. As we now have Sunday Hunting in the Commonwealth, deer season could run straight through for 2 weeks. Then the folks that cannot get off work or would rather hunt all weekend, CAN on the weekend following the Monday opener. Most importantly, we can give local businesses and volunteer organizations their income opportunities back and preserve those cherished days leading up to Monday for honest camp work and family tradition.

As the PA Game Commission is clearly unwilling to move the opener back to Monday, we ask for your help to force this change through legislation. We respectfully urge you to support and advance [HB495](#) and [SB708](#).

Please reply to this correspondence with your position on these bills so that your voting intention can be recorded and reported to our membership. If you require more information, please feel free to reach out to us.

Yours In Liberty,



Klint Macro
President of The Allegheny County Sportsmen’s League
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The Conservation Pledge:

I give my pledge as an American to save and faithfully to defend from waste, the natural resources of my Country, The soil, the water, the air, the minerals, the plant life and the wildlife. This is my pledge.